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000 If one of the litigants was a Kota his headman would also take part in the council.

695 The proceedings would begin with statements from the contending parties. Male witnesses might then be brought to support these (566) statements. Females and serfs[9] never appeared before the councils, but if their evidence were considered important it would be heard in private by the headman in charge. Toreas could make statements and attend the meeting but used not to take an active part in the council's deliberations.

(602) A man's family and lineage would normally support him in a dispute and provided the most usual 'witnesses'. Beside their (787) testimony other kinds of admissible evidence included written receipts, re-enactments of the event, oaths testifying to a man's innocence and pronouncements uttered by a god through the mouth of an entranced man. If necessary a postponement was allowed for additional evidence to be brought. Presentation of the evidence was followed by a council discussion, after which the headman in charge voiced his opinion and determined punishment. It was not unusual to punish both parties in a dispute.[10]

Crime and Punishment

681 The following partial list of punishments suggests the sanctions traditionally placed on various crimes:

Planned murder of an adult—hanging
Unpremeditated murder—Rs. 48 fine, or servitude to the victim's family
Causing someone to commit suicide—Rs. 48 fine
Failure to obey an important order of the headman—ostracism
Failure to pay a fine—ostracism
Rape of a father's wife—ostracism or Rs. 48 fine
Rape of a son's wife—Rs. 24 fine or less
Rape of a brother's wife—minimal fine
} Reduced if the woman had consented; i.e., adultery
Man beating victim with leather—Rs. 24 fine, or head shaved
Woman beating victim with boom—Rs. 24 fine, or made to parade through village with basket of ash on her head
Minor misdemeanour—bow down inside the circle of the council (the minimal punishment)
● (962) Attempted suicide—not considered an offence.

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ceremony (B.E.M.S., 1850, no. 10, 23; compare B.E.M.S., 1854, no. 14, 41). Then, as later, Christ was considered *another* Hindu god, perhaps an *avatar* of Vishnu.[11] Even the missionary could be incorporated into Hindu thinking. Metz, for example, once visited the village where a woman had just committed suicide by swallowing opium (the common method then among Badagas). As he had previously condemned her for leaving her husband and taking a lover he was now treated with great circumspection: the frightened villagers took him for either a sorcerer or a god (Metz, 1864, 71–76). Missionaries were sometimes called 'Shiva kandidhone—Swami kandidhone', the man who has seen Shiva (B.E.M.S., 1849, no. 9, 45).

The 'Christian temple' was another case of syncretism. In one village Badagas claimed that a vision of Christ had appeared to them, telling them to believe the preachers. These people promised to build a Christian temple, which they did around 1855. In it they enshrined a New Testament in the Tamil language. A legend quickly developed that every night Jesus came to taste the milk and bananas offered on his altar. But when Metz visited that village in 1863 he found the temple fallen into disrepair and the village nearly deserted. He blamed this on the current famine; the Badagas tended to blame the famine on *him*. This was the occasion already alluded to, when the Badagas interpreted the preacher's explanation of Christ's authority as meaning that Christ was responsible for the death and starvation at that time (Metz, 1864, 69–70; Reclus, 1891, 239–240).

In the same year the Badagas of that particular village went to a temple for divination and asked: 'Is he who is called Jesus Christ a good Swami [lord]?' The response was negative (Metz, 1864, 71; Reclus, 1891, 238–240). Another instance of Hindu practices being directed towards the mission was cited by Wieland. A child in Ke:ti was sick; its Hindu father promised to give five rupees to the Christian God if He would cure the child. As the child subsequently recovered the missionary was given the coins (B.E.M.S., 1907, no. 58, 68). Such action is traditional and quite routine in Hindu temples all over India.

On one occasion the Badaga boys rushed from a school in consternation when a missionary asked them to repeat a prayer after him, for they feared that 'if we say the *mantroum* of the Christians, Christ will hear, Christ will come, Christ will carry us off!' (Reclus, 1891, 239–240).

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friends, the oldest woman of the senior generation level receiving it first, and then passing it on down the hierarchy of seniority.

Men commonly smoke *bi:dis* or other commercial cigarettes, but in the early days they too smoked dried pieces of the pepper vine.

Opium

2.8. Unlike tobacco, which grows on the Mysore Plain, the opium poppy is cultivated on the Nilgiris and has been since at least 1811. Until 1845 Badagas manufactured opium legally (Price 1908: 127, 224), and a few people have continued to do so in village gardens ever since. Poppy heads are still obtainable from the bazaars, and Todas, Kotas and Badagas often steep these in cups of coffee (Metz 1864: 132; Gover 1871: 87; Aiyappan 1948: 119). In the nineteenth century addiction seems to have been an occasional problem among Badagas (Macpherson 1820: lix; Mörike 1859: 31). Addicts felt lazy and quite fatigued. Apparently the opium was always chewed, and never smoked (Ouchterlony 1868: 26; "Geofry" 1881: 134; Francis 1908: 291). "The opium was made by scratching the green poppy-heads and collecting, after a day or two, the juice which had exuded, which had by then become gummy. This was generally done in the cold season, when the juice was supposed to be thickest." (Francis: 1908:290) It was more common in the nineteenth century to collect the poppy seed than this exudation, however; but some good quality opium was sold in the plains and even exported to China (Ouchterlony 1868: 26; Francis 1908: 290).

As we demonstrate in Chapter 6, opium was commonly used as a medicine, or as a technique of suicide, rather than as a hallucinogen. The poppy leaves were also boiled for one medicine. Therapists recognize that an addict cannot stop taking opium all at once, for "his nerves will not work and he will become mad," as I was told. Therefore the therapist gradually decreases the daily dosage of opium allowed to an addict until he is getting none.

Other hallucinogens do not seem to have been used by Badagas, even though some of them knew that the Indian willow leaf was dried, pounded and then smoked by the neighbouring Kurumbas for its hallucinogenic effect.

Hygiene

2.9. During the nineteenth century a universal complaint from

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nely" there. It is recognized that a girl may feign possession, perhaps to gain attention, perhaps to rush off wildly into the woods followed by a young man intent on taking care of her desires while there.

Ghosts are ultimately driven out either by throwing the host person bodily into a river, or by inducing the ghost into a lock of her hair, which is then cut off and either nailed to a tree or corked carefully into a bottle and buried away from the village so that it cannot escape again. The following cases offer a fair range of Badaga exorcism practices.

8.3. CASE 1. In 1962 a boy, aged 18, failed the S.S.L.C. examination and committed suicide by hanging himself. He did this because he had told all his friends he would certainly pass, and so could not face them.

Another man and his 16-year-old wife slept in a separate house from that of the man's parents. One night when they were on the way to this house the ghost of the suicide entered the girl. He was not related to her, but was in a distant "sister's husband" relationship to her husband. A month after the ghost got into her, it became active.

In May 1963, the ghost was driven out by a Badaga exorcist from another village. He is reputed to know spells strong enough to kill people, and some strong enough to remove curses laid on by other magicians. In the present case, once the ghost became active in the girl, she went into a trance and claimed to be this person or that; always a male, though. It was because the people thought she was feigning possession and would not believe her that her husband brought the exorcist. At the first seance he told her she was bluffing; and so then while in a trance she identified some of the people present, even though she was newly married to this village and might not have known everyone there. After that the people believed she had a ghost, and the ghost "started telling the truth."

Every night for a week the exorcist held a seance with her, for which he came from his village especially. A crowd of some 50 or 60 villagers, including the girl's close relatives, was always present. These people came because it is the customary thing to do, rather than because they were curious. During the seance they sang folksongs, but not hymns; and on the last day they were thanked for coming and singing. The exorcist gets little for his work: on the last evening he is usually given a loincloth and a cloak. Each seance began around 2200 hrs., and lasted for two or three hours. It was

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Apparently it had; for were this not so the girl would have started dancing again. Since that time the ghost has given no further trouble.

8. 4. CASE 2. Lakshmanan's best friend was Lingan, an age-mate who lived in the same village. In 1951 Lingan studied very hard for the S. S. L. C. examination, but was the only one in his group who failed. Very dejected, he burnt all his school transcripts and notes while on the way home; and soon after entering his house, when his mother went out, he hanged himself from a rafter. A neighbouring old lady happened to come in and found Lingan hanging there: she came out shouting, and then Lakshmanan and some others rushed in. Lakshmanan lifted Lingan up while another person cut the rope. They sent for a doctor, but by the time he arrived the boy was dead.

Lingan's neighbour was Lakshmanan's cousin, an adolescent girl whom Lingan had been fond of. Shortly after his suicide Lingan possessed her; and when Lakshmanan came home for the college vacation in 1952 he went to see the girl who was supposedly possessed. She grabbed Lakshmanan by the arm, and the spirit in her spoke through her mouth, using her voice. The ghost, in talking to Lakshmanan, did not say it was Lingan, and Lakshmanan disbelieved it anyway. Then Lakshamanan and the ghost began to talk about certain secrets that supposedly only the two of them had known about. One thing was that they used to go out of the village together to smoke; so now Lakshmanan said, "How about a smoke?" The ghost agreed and asked for some Scissors cigarettes, Lingan's favourite brand. Lakshmanan gave a cigarette to the girl, who supposedly had never smoked, and told the ghost to smoke it as he used to. The girl then went through Lingan's special routine of taking a match from the box and lighting it, using one hand only, and then once the cigarette was lit blowing numerous smoke rings.

By now Lakshmanan felt that the spirit must be Lingan, and the ghost then admitted that he was. The ghost proved his identity by saying the complete Gettysburg Address in English. This was something the two boys had studied for the S. S. L. C. ; yet the girl, who mouthed it perfectly, herself spoke little Tamil and no English at all, for she was illiterate! Lakshmanan then said, "How about the other things we learnt for the S.S.L.C.?" The ghost then continued with all of Tennyson's "Daffodils" and Sarojini Naidu's poem "Bangle Seller," in good English.

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763 Although the Badagas do not write wills, a dying man may make
428 a benefactory statement, each wish in it being called a *sa:la*
795 ("debt"). It is believed that if these wishes are not followed the spirit of the dead man will trouble some of his relatives. It does not possess the wrongdoer as a ghost but puts a curse on him. Since Badagas do not believe in a further reimcarnation the spirit of the dead man will be able to go to heaven if he has done enough good deeds in this life. If his dying wishes are not followed, however, he will have to remain in limbo (*eḍe lo:ka*, "the middle place"). This dismal prospect should weigh heavily on his relatives.

763 In Badaga belief a person does not die when he gives out his last
764 breath, but rather when he takes in his last breath. This breath is believed to remain in his body for the next ten days, and enables the corpse to hear and be aware of everything that is going on around it, even though the dead person cannot open the eyes, speak, or move. Thus people commonly speak to a corpse during
764 the funeral. For most Badaga phratries this ceremony involves cre-
[615] mation one or two days later, on ground several hundred meters outside the hamlet. Lingayats and children are instead buried at that place, and nowadays poor widows of various phratries may have to be buried because cremation has become quite costly (Noble and Noble 1965).

762 9.6. Suicide is by no means uncommon among the Badagas, particularly among young married women, and it is most usually accomplished by swallowing opium. Failing that, the juice from oleander

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Table 4. Death per thousand of the entire Rural Population of the Nilgiri Plateau, 1921-1930

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	Cholera	Small-pox	Plague	Fever	Dysentery/ Diarhoea	Other Causes	Total 1,000 People
Rural Coonoor taluk (1921-25)	0.20	0.30	0.10	10.20	6.10	9.40	26.40
Ditto (1926-30)	0.01	0.08	0.05	11.47	5.81	10.90	28.32
Rural Gotacamund taluk (1921-25)	0.80	0.50	0.30	21.90	4.60	10.90	38.30
Ditto (1926-30)	0.03	0.14	0.24	16.50	4.96	11.30	33.17

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roots or nuts is quite effective. The common South Indian technique of jumping down a well is not possible in a terrain which has virtually no wells (Basel Mission 1853: 42; Rivers 1906: 635). In early times Badagas who wanted to take their lives swallowed the poisonous sap of the giant lobelia. Anyone whose life is ebbing and is thought to have taken poison is occasionally saved by being forced to swallow soapy water: this causes him to vomit. We have already described some other techniques to bring on vomiting in 6.54.

The Causes of Death

9.7. While the commonest causes of death among the Badagas are well known to public health officials, the number of deaths attributable to each is not apparent from recent statements. There are somewhat reliable figures available on causes of death for the entire rural population in Coonoor and Ootacamund *Taluks* during 1921-1930, and as these are the two sectors of the Nilgiri District where Badagas preponderate rurally the statistics can be viewed as largely referring to this community (see Table 4, based on Madras 1928: 9 and Madras 1933: 8). These statistics express average number of deaths per thousand of the rural population annually.

We can also cite figures of questionable reliability for the period 1951-1960, but again these figures (Table 5) cover the entire population of the Nilgiri District, not merely the Badagas. One Nilgiri disease pattern is very clear from Table 5, namely thet the dry hot month of May and the windy monsoon months of June and July have by far the highest death rate, particularly with cases diagnosed as fevers, dysentery, and respiratory ailments. Malaria, although of little concern today, also peaks in those months. The high rate of deaths in childbirth in April, however—if these figures may by trusted—is not indicative of a high birth rate in April, and thus of a high rate of conception during the monsoon month of July, it is instead an accidental feature that characterized 1959 alone (Nambiar 1965: 381). Badagas recognize the nesting season, from the start of Tai (around October-November) till when the fledglings leave the nests (around January) as the main season of human and cattle sicknesses.

The reliability of these figures in Tables 4 and 5 is in question because we do not know to what extent deaths occurred in the more remote Nilgiri villages that went unreported or with their